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June 3th, 1974

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## MEMORANDUM

Status of North Vietnamese Forces in Laos

1. The Laos Provisional Government of National Union was established on April 5th, 1974, marking the beginning of the stipulated 60 day period during which all remaining foreign troops were to be withdrawn from Laos. Since early April, [redacted] less than 24 hours before the June 4th deadline, North Vietnamese troops on Laotian soil number an estimated 47,000\*, more than three-fourths of which are located in southern Laos (see table below). Of the total, 18,000 are combat troops -- including those in 6 infantry regiments -- and about 29,000 are logistics personnel.

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Order of Battle of North Vietnamese Forces in Laos

	<u>Total</u>		<u>North Laos</u>		<u>South Laos</u>	
	Jun 74	Feb 73	Jun 74	Feb 73	Jun 74	Feb 73
TOTAL	<u>47</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>61</u>
COMBAT*	18	37	6	16	12	21
ADMIN SERVICES	29	46	4	6	25	40

\* Includes personnel in antiaircraft units.

2. At the time of the Laos cease-fire, Hanoi had some 83,000 troops stationed in Laos, with most (61,000) committed to the protection and support of the North Vietnamese logistics system in the Panhandle. Since then, about 36,000 North Vietnamese military personnel have withdrawn from Laos to North Vietnam or to Communist strongholds in South Vietnam, reducing the strength of both combat and administrative services personnel by more than 40 perc

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3. There have been tenuous indications that some North Vietnamese logistic units in northern Laos may be withdrawing, but the moves could be part of a traditional rainy season drawdown. In southern Laos, there has been no recent evidence of impending North Vietnamese withdrawals. Nevertheless, in the next month or so the Communists may temporarily withdraw additional rear services troops from the Laotian Panhandle as the rainy season takes full effect and logistic activity is reduced.

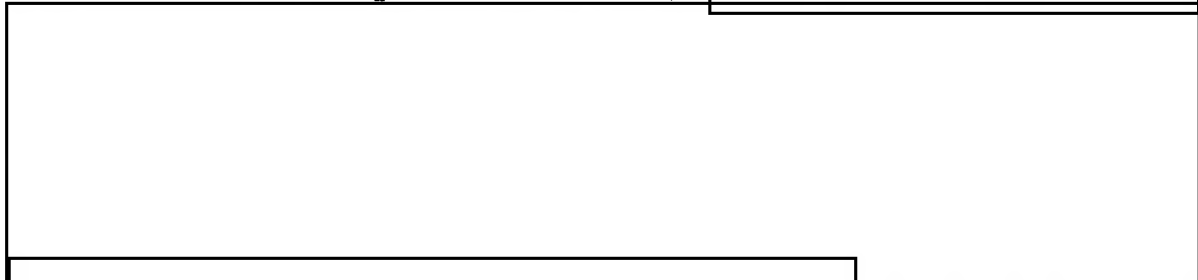
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4. In the longer term Hanoi probably will maintain a sizeable military force in Laos, 



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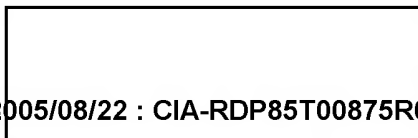


In southern

Laos, the logistic corridor is still an integral part of overall North Vietnamese capability to support their forces in South Vietnam and it is almost certain that Hanoi will not abandon it. The continued maintenance of this system will require a large, permanent manpower commitment.

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(10 June 74)